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UNCLAS ANKARA 001630

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: IRAQI TURKMEN FRONT CONCERNED ABOUT POSSIBLE
NEWRUZ VIOLENCE IN KIRKUK

1. (U) Turkish MFA Director General for Middle East Affairs Tahsin Burcuoglu called DCM March 17 on instruction from FM Gul to pass on the contents of a phone conversation between Gul and Iraqi Turkmen Front (ITF) leader Faruk Abdulrahman, who called in from Kirkuk. Abdulrahman told Gul that his convoy had been attacked earlier in the week by an IED which damaged one of the cars. Abdulrahman reported an enhanced presence of radical Shi'a, and worried that the March 21 Kurdish Newruz celebrations in Kirkuk could become violent. He told Gul that if there were provocations, it could lead to "bloody events." Abdulrahman said he had already warned US authorities in Kirkuk and the CPA in Baghdad that March 21 would be a dangerous day.

2. (U) Burcuoglu told the DCM that Abdulrahman may have had specific information, although his concerns may have been based only on an "analysis" of the situation.
EDELMAN